



A Decade of Study into Repository Fees for Archeological Curation

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Introduction

Many repositories, particularly those associated with university and state museums, have a long history of providing curatorial services at no cost to the collection owners to manage, store, and care for archeological collections created during projects on federal, state, local, and private lands. At least two factors were involved in the development of this relationship. One was the enactment of the Antiquities Act in 1906. It required that “the gatherings” from an archeological investigation on federal land be placed “...for permanent preservation in public museums (16 USC 432),” such as university and state museums. The second factor was that university faculty and students were often involved in the archeological projects that created the collections of artifacts, ecofacts, and associated records. The resulting collections were then stored in their affiliated university museums, and the ensuing curatorial services were often provided to the federal or state agency collection owners in an informal exchange for access to and use of the collections in university research and education. This worked out well for both the museums and government, especially federal agencies that did not have repositories or adequate staff to catalog, store, and manage these collections. At the state level, some state-funded repositories, especially museums, existed and curated archeological collections from state lands.

The enactment of additional historic preservation laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (AHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), and their implementing regulations initiated changes in that relationship. Several things happened. First, a sharp increase in the number of federal- and state-mandated archeological projects resulting from those laws yielded an equally sharp rise in the number of collections being sent to repositories for curation. Although repositories might have had room to store new collections in those years, they did not have adequate staff to catalog, conserve, box, and provide access to the sudden influx of collections. Nor did they have proper security and fire prevention systems in place (Ford 1977; Lindsay et al. 1979, 1980; Marquardt 1977; General Accounting Office 1987).

Second, the regulations “Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections” (36 CFR Part 79 < <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/TOOLS/36CFR79.HTM>>) were issued in 1990. These regulations clearly state that federal agencies own the new and existing collections resulting from publicly-supported projects on federal lands or from federal undertakings under their control, and are responsible for the long-term curation and care of these collections. The regulations also establish procedures and standards for the proper curation of federal collections, which include many potentially costly storage and housekeeping requirements that most repositories did not have in place. A number of state and local governments adapted these regulations into state and local regulations and policies, which affected an even broader range of repositories.

Finally, the archeological community has long recognized that archeological collections are irreplaceable, non-renewable resources. However, it is relatively recent that its members have come to appreciate just what it means to preserve archeological artifacts, records, and reports in perpetuity for research, education, and heritage uses (Marquardt et al. 1982; also see Sullivan and Childs 2003 for a history of the plight of archeological collections in the 20th century.) This involves a significant commitment by archeologists to properly budget for collections recovery and care as they develop each project scope of work.

All of these factors increased costs for those repositories accepting archeological collections for curation. Who is responsible for covering these costs? From where will the necessary funding come? Although 36 CFR Part 79 identified federal agencies as responsible for the costs of collections from federal lands, this would not cover collections from state, local, and private lands. Repositories began to react. By 1975, at least one repository implemented a fee for the long-term curation of collections and, by 1985, over 30 repositories across the U.S. were charging curation fees. The days of curatorial services for archeological collections at no cost to their owners were coming to an end.

This study examines the results of three informal, yet systematic investigations into the adoption and use of repository curation fees across the United States. Pertinent information was assembled in 1997/98, 2002 ([Childs and Kinsey](http://www.nps.gov/archeology/TOOLS/feesStud.htm) <<http://www.nps.gov/archeology/TOOLS/feesStud.htm>> 2003), and 2007/08. The goal of the first effort conducted in 1997/98 was to investigate the introduction of curation fees nationwide, how fees were structured, how these fee structures varied nationwide, and the nature of the criteria used to establish a fee structure. The surveys conducted in 2002, and continued in the current 2007/08 study, also examined key trends in the costs of curation across the U.S. and, when possible, identified issues related to those trends. None of the three projects were exhaustive. They built on each other to provide the most comprehensive body of information compiled to date on this important topic.

Project History

The original stimulus for this project was simple. In 1996, Childs attended a conference in Berkeley, California called "Partnership Opportunities for Federally-Associated Collections." Sponsored and organized by the Interagency Federal Collections Working Group (now called the [Interagency Federal Collections Alliance](http://www.doi.gov/museum/fedcollalliancehomepage.htm) <<http://www.doi.gov/museum/fedcollalliancehomepage.htm>>), the goal of the conference was to foster discussion about collections issues between staffs from federal agencies and non-federal repositories. One issue pervading the conference sessions concerned the high costs of curation and the continuing rise in those costs. It became clear during the conference that repositories were beginning to respond to rising costs by charging fees for the curatorial services they provided. Neither the staffs of the federal agencies or the non-federal repositories seemed to fully embrace this trend. However, no one knew, for example, how these fees were calculated, which repositories charged fees across the country, how the fees were being used, and related issues. These questions required investigation.

Several sources were used to select the repositories contacted to participate in the 1997/98 study. The most obvious was from the list of participants at the 1996 conference in Berkeley. Another source was the list of respondents to the 1994 Survey of Federally-Associated Collections Housed in Non-Federal Institutions conducted by the Department of the Interior [Museum Property Program](http://www.doi.gov/museum/) <<http://www.doi.gov/museum/>> in cooperation with the Interagency Federal Collections Working Group. The institutions that reported holding significant archeological collections in the 1994 survey were used in this repository fee study. Finally, the 1996-97 American Anthropological Association Guide to Departments of Anthropology was consulted for educational institutions with archeological collections housed in university or college museums. Only institutions that curated archeological collections in curatorial facilities were included in the survey results.

The 2002 informal survey ([Childs and Kinsey](http://www.nps.gov/archeology/TOOLS/feesStud.htm) <<http://www.nps.gov/archeology/TOOLS/feesStud.htm>> 2003) solicited input from the 1997/98 respondents that charged fees or were considering it. Word-of-mouth was also used to identify other possible participants across all fifty states and the District of Columbia. As in 1997/98, concerted effort was expended trying to find at least two repositories in each state that curated significant numbers of archeological collections. This was not always possible.

Study Participants in 2007-08

The 2007/8 survey was conducted from September 2007 through March 2008. Phone calls and emails were used to contact curatorial staff at 221 repositories, which were identified from a number of sources. First, the list of repositories used in the 2002 survey provided the foundation for the project. Second, the institutions contacted in 1997/8, but not in 2002, were re-contacted to determine if their status had changed in ten years. Third, a careful search of the Internet for other repositories charging fees was conducted. Fourth, each repository that responded was asked for the name and contact of other repositories in their region or state. Finally, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provided a list of non-federal repositories known to hold BLM collections. The latter four methods yielded many more repositories to contact, including a number of Native American repositories.

	1997/98	2002	2007/08
# Repositories Contacted	128	123	221
# Repositories that Responded	108	112	180
# Repositories that Charge Fees	59	69	96
# Repositories Considering Charging Fees	10	4	12

Table 1: Summary of the Repositories Involved in the Informal Studies

Of the 221 repositories contacted, 180 (81%) graciously responded (see Credits & Acknowledgments for a list of the repositories that responded.) Although this is a somewhat lower response rate than in 2002 (91%), the actual number of respondents was much higher (Table 1). Of these, it is noteworthy that 11 repositories are not accepting new collections due to lack of space, and one repository that participated in the previous surveys has closed due to administrative and other factors.

More than half (122 [55%]) of the repositories contacted were university or university-associated museums. Of those that responded, 26 only curate collections created by university staff while, as discussed below, more than half charge fees. Several state institutions curate only collections from their state, and may or may not charge fees. Private museums, non-profit repositories, and city-owned institutions were also contacted and may or may not charge fees. The Native American repositories and cultural centers that were contacted and responded tend not to charge fees and only accept archeological collections that meet their scopes of collections related to specific Native American cultural traditions.

Many repositories involved in this study expressed interest in our results. Some remarked about their use of the results from the 1997/98 and 2002 surveys. Each responding repository also granted permission to use their data in this and other reports. No institutions were hesitant to provide dollar figures for their fee structures, although some are in the process of changing their fee structure.

A Brief History of Curation Fees

Based on information provided during the three informal survey efforts, a few repositories began charging fees before 1975, not too long after the enactment of the NHPA in 1966. As the number of collections from federally-mandated archeological projects kept increasing due to NHPA and other federal and state historic preservation laws, the evidence suggests that many repositories could not afford to continue to cover all the costs to curate collections they were receiving. Over time, the number of repositories charging fees has increased. The following breakdown shows the decade when the repositories that responded in the 2007/08 informal survey began to charge fees¹:

¹ Seven repositories included in this breakdown stopped accepting collections and charging fees for various reasons, and are counted in the 2007/08 informal study as charging fees. Three repositories that are counted in the 2007/08 informal study as charging fees are not included in this breakdown because they did not state when they began charging fees.

- 1970s: 8 repositories
- 1980s: 40 repositories
- 1990s: 33 repositories
- 2000-2008: 19 repositories.

The number of repositories that began charging fees in the first decade of the 21st century suggests that the trend for new repositories to charge fees continues. This trend does not seem to be leveling off based on the comparative data of repositories that considered charging fees in the three surveys. Twelve (13%) of the repositories that currently do not charge fees are considering doing so in the near future. This compares to four (6%) that were considering fees in 2002 and 10 (17%) in 1997/98.

Curatorial Fee Structures for Collections of Artifacts in 2007/08

One hundred eighty repositories responded in 2007/08, although 14 (8%) respondents said they are not repositories of archeological collections or provided other reasons why they could not be included in the following analysis². Seventy (42%) repositories do not charge fees, 36 of which do not charge specifically because they only curate collections they own and are recovered by their staff. On the other hand, 96 (58%) repositories charge fees for collections; primarily those of federal and state agencies, private firms that have a contracted obligation to provide collections storage and care, usually "in perpetuity", and some non-profit organizations. Some repositories charging fees end up owning the collections they curate for a fee, such as state museums curating collections from state land. Other repositories do not own the collections they curate for a fee, such as collections from federal land or federal undertakings. Almost unanimously, repositories do not charge fees for a collection that is deeded as a gift from private landholders.

Figure 1 provides comparative fee data assembled in 2007/08, 2002, and 1997/98 for artifact collections. Due to the length of the chart, only repositories that charged fees or said they were considering doing so in at least one of the studies are included.

The fee structures currently used by U.S. repositories vary considerably in three ways:

1. the unit of assessment (i.e., the basic unit used to determine the size of a collection and calculate the appropriate curation fee);
2. the type of service(s) provided for a fee; and,
3. the amount of the curation fee.

Regarding the unit of assessment, of the 96 repositories charging fees, 82 or 85% calculate the appropriate fee by using the cubic foot (ft³.) They may also base their charge on a standard archival box size that is close to a cubic foot (1.3 ft³.) Some variation occurs with this unit of assessment. One repository has a sliding fee scale; the fee per box decreases as the number of boxed increases in increments of five or ten boxes.

While most repositories use the cubic foot as the standard unit of assessment, a few repositories use other unit measures. A few repositories have other box sizes, including 21x21x3 inches, 18x12x6 inches, a "banker's" box, and a "drawer." Since it was not feasible to calculate in perpetuity or annual fees by a box unit, one city repository charges \$20 per person-field day with a minimum of \$100. Several repositories determine their fee on a case-by-case basis. One deals with the collection as a whole, rather than by box, and considers the total cost of the storage space to be used, the supplies needed, and the labor involved in processing the collection.

The primary types of fees reported by repositories in the 2007/08 informal study are similar to those reported in the previous two studies:

² Therefore, the total number of respondents for analytical purposes is 166.

- One-time fee: usually assessed when the collection is deposited at a repository and is intended to cover all curation costs "in perpetuity;"
- Processing fee: for cleaning, conserving, packaging, and/or cataloging new collections according to the repository's collection management and acceptance policies, and may include charges for the staff hours involved;
- Annual fee: for care of the collection on a yearly basis that is usually assessed by the ft³;
- 5 or 10 year assessment – a fee structure that is maintained for a span of 5 or 10 years and is reassessed when a curation agreement ends and a new one is negotiated;
- Registration fee: for registering a collection with the repository prior to deposit;
- Single artifact-related fees: different fees for different types of single or special artifacts; and,
- Combinations of the above, which is quite common depending on the size and complexity of the collection being accepted for curation.

A new fee type identified in this study is for maintenance, which is charged on a periodic basis for additional care and/or conservation of individual objects or portions of collections above and beyond regular curation services. Eleven (11%) repositories inform the collection owner of their intention to charge an additional fee for maintenance when they determine that certain materials in a collection need extra care.

Almost all the repositories that charge fees (95 [99%] of 96) have a one-time, in-perpetuity fee. Thirteen (14%) repositories also have a processing fee, regardless of whether the collections have been prepared according to their standards. Twenty three (24%) repositories charge an annual fee, usually for the federal collections. In some of these cases, the repository has an in-perpetuity fee structure for collections from state land and an annual fee for federal collections. Several of these repositories noted that they are considering dropping the one-time fee and only charging an annual fee in the future.

A significant sub-group of the respondents (101/166; 61%) are public university or university-related repositories. Regarding the extent to which this sub-group charges fees and what types, the following summarizes the key findings³:

- 59 charge fees. Some of the variation in these fee structures are: one repository decreased its fees since 2002, but will probably increase them in the future due to lack of space and the need for a new facility; two do not have a standard fee structure, but one assesses fees based on the different phases of a project and the other operates on a case by case basis.
- 26 only curate collections created by their university staff and do not charge those staff for curatorial services. Of these, 13 used to accept new collections and charge fees, but stopped because of lack of space and/or lack of support from their university administrations.
- 12 accept collections not made by university staff, but do not assess fees for them. This is a noticeable drop from the 2002 study when 20 did not charge fees for collections not made by university staff. However, the trend toward implementing fee structures continues since four more of these repositories are now considering charging fees. This compares to two in 2002 and seven in 1997/8.
- One accepts monetary donations.

Regarding differences in the amount of curation fees charged for in-perpetuity curation of artifacts across the United States, Childs and Kinsey (2003) demonstrated considerable variation in both the 2002 and 1997/98 informal studies. However, the highest curation fees consistently tended to be charged in the western states. Childs and Kinsey proposed that the higher fees in the west had to do with the higher proportion of public lands and the large numbers of federal, state, and local government-mandated archeological projects there that yield collections, some very large in size.

³ Seven repositories were not included in this analysis, primarily because they do not curate archeological collections.

The previous findings are corroborated by the variation in the 2007/08 in-perpetuity fees illustrated in [Map 1](#). This map shows the distribution of the highest fee charged by the responding repositories in each state. [Map 2](#) shows the low-high range of fees charged by the 2007/08 responding repositories in each state with the same background colors as in Map 1. These data are summarized on a regional basis in Table 2 below.

Region	Per Box/Cu.ft.
Northeast	\$85-500
Southeast	\$125-330
Midwest	\$150-1000
Intermountain	\$234-1000
Pacific West	\$72.50-1200
Alaska	\$200-500

Table 2: Range of In-perpetuity Fees by Region in 2007/08.

Overall, repository fees throughout the country are increasing everywhere, although one repository in California recently reduced its fee from \$1500 to \$800 per cubic foot. There are fewer states with repositories that do not charge fees, and more of those repositories not charging fees are considering instituting fees. Interestingly, several 2007/08 respondents that charge fees in the western states noted the significant number of collections they receive and the related costs they must bear.

Curatorial Fee Structures for Associated Records in 2007/08

A collection of artifacts from an archeological project has greatly limited utility for research, interpretive, or heritage purposes if it lacks its associated records (Sullivan and Childs 2003; Childs and Corcoran 2000). These records provide key contextual information about the artifacts recovered in the field, including information about their cultural and technological attributes, the history of their care in the repository, and other data. This information is critical to the research, educational and heritage values of the artifacts, as well as to interpretation. Records include field notes, maps, photos, artifact catalogs, preliminary reports, and laboratory notes, all of which may be in paper or digital formats, as well as electronic databases. Associated records must be handled differently than objects (Drew 2004; Eiteljorg 2004,) yet should be curated in the same facility as the objects from the same investigation to facilitate research and other purposes.

[Figure 2](#) provides comparative fee data assembled from all three informal surveys for the associated records. The repositories charging fees for associated records in 2007/08, as in 2002 and 1997/98, can be put into two groups. In one group, the repository does not differentiate between the artifacts or the associated records in its fee structure; the same in-perpetuity cubic foot fee is charged to include both without distinction. The other group of repositories has an explicit fee structure for the associated documents, which may or may not be different from the fee charged for the artifacts.

In 2007/08, repositories with a separate fee for the associated documents usually use the linear inch or linear foot as the unit of assessment. Maps and other large formatted paper sometimes incur an additional fee because they take up more space and often require special handling. Several repositories also charge a separate fee for non-paper materials in 2007/08, such as photos or digital media. Another repository does not charge by the linear foot, but by the processing time needed to prepare the associated records for curation and storage.

Fee Structure Type	1997/8	2002	2007/8
Separate Fee for Records	31 (52%)	40 (58%)	43 (45%)
Included in Artifact Fee	28 (48%)	29 (42%)	53 (55%)
Total # With Fees	59	69	96

Table 3: Repository Fee Structure Types for Associated Records over Time

The data about associated record fees over time are revealing (Table 3.) Although all the repositories in the three surveys charged a fee for associated records, the way the fee was structured has vacillated over time. Between 1997/98 and 2002, more repositories charged separate fees for the associated records and the artifacts, whether or not it was for the same amount. By 2007/08, however, a higher percentage of repositories simply combined both artifacts and associated records into one fee assessed by the cubic foot. A possible explanation for this change is expediency. Several repositories that charge the same fee acknowledged that they do so for simplicity purposes, since they fear it is more difficult to keep track of different fee schedules. However, some repositories with the same fee noted that they added more to their cubic foot box fee to cover the different costs of the associated records. This finding indicates that some repositories carefully consider the different costs involved for associated records as opposed to artifacts.

	1997/8	2002	2007/8
Same Fee as Artifacts	25 (81%)	29 (72%)	20 (47%)
Different Fee from Artifacts	6 (19%)	11 (28%)	23 (53%)
Total w/ Separate Fee for Records	31	40	43
Lower Fee than Artifacts	5 (83%)	11 (100%)	13 (57%)
Higher Fee than Artifacts	1 (17%)	0	10 (43%)

Table 4: Repositories with Separate Fee Structures for Associated Records over Time

Related to the above finding is whether or not the repositories recognize that different care with different costs may be required for the two components of an archeological collection.

The difference between the number of repositories having an explicit fee structure that explicitly identifies associated records or a fee structure that does not is not that great (Table 3.) It is eye-opening, however, to examine the relative amount of the fee charged for associated records when it is explicit in the fee structure. Table 4 shows the notable rise in the number of repositories that set a different fee in their fee structure for associated records and artifacts over time. Even more revealing is the change from charging less than the artifacts to charging more, presumably after determining that the care of associated documents is more costly. In fact, several respondents in 2007/08 explained that the need for a different fee for associated records than artifacts is due to the different costs of archival records processing, dealing with those not on acid-free paper, and other long-term conservation requirements. Some recognized the additional requirements for the associated records when they reorganized their storage space and discovered the unacceptable condition of many records.

Finally, a new development regarding associated records has occurred since the 2002 study. With the rise of the digital age there has been a significant rise in the quantity of digital files and data archeologists send to repositories for long-term curation. The question, however, is what do the repositories do with these data? Many repositories store the data container – the compact disk, floppy disk, magnetic tape – in the same or separate box as the paper records and presume the data in the container will be preserved. However, some are now downloading the files onto a server to facilitate future migration into appropriate formats for long-term preservation and to improve access for researchers and others. This is an exciting step forward, but the process

incurs real costs for the hardware, software, and the staff expertise involved. Thus, a few repositories are now charging for this service, which range from \$6 to \$30 per gigabyte. It is likely that more repositories will recognize the additional care required for the digital media and will charge appropriate fees since so much vital information is now digital and is not reproduced on paper.

The Criteria Used to Assess Curation Fees

All three informal surveys asked about the criteria used to develop a fee structure, since the actual costs of curation are covered only if the fee assessment is adequately and accurately determined. The findings in 1997/98, 2002, and 2007/08, however, reveal that institutions vary considerably in the methods and level of detail they use to assess fees. In most cases, there was no single criterion used, but a combination of factors to make the best-educated decision on appropriate fees. The most common criteria are listed here in order of frequency, along with the number and percentage of repositories that mentioned each one:

- To cover overhead costs for processing collections, managing the repository building, and maintenance of a computerized database, among other things, necessary to preserve and use the collections according to federal regulations (in-perpetuity costs). (42 [44%])
- To meet per hour salary estimate for accessioning collections. (36 [38%])
- Consulted the fee structure of the repositories in the area and nearby states and used a comparable fee. (33 [34%])
- To meet annual self-storage facility fee or purchase of new storage equipment. (27 [28%])
- To cover estimated costs of environmental controls (e.g., heating/cooling, humidity) and inflation. (25 [26%])
- Best guess. (8 [8%])
- Consulted past NPS informal surveys on curation fees. (5 [4%])
- Fee legally set by county or state. (4 [4%])
- Consulted with conservation and financial analysts. (1 [1%])
- Considered what CRM firms will pay; in other words, what the market will bear. (1 [1%])
- Evaluated different phases of the archeological project (for fees established on a case-by-case basis). (1 [1%])

In general, the 2002 and 2007/08 informal surveys revealed that repositories are putting more effort into estimating the real costs of curation when developing or changing their fee structures. This is a positive development. Ten years ago, a large number of repositories charged the same fee(s) as their neighboring institutions and did not consider their real costs. This finding strongly suggested that the fees charged could not approach covering the true costs of curation. Currently, repositories regularly include a number of criteria when determining their fees, including: overhead costs for processing collections; building management and repairs; computer maintenance; professional staff salaries; rental of off-site storage facilities; purchase of new storage equipment; environmental controls; housekeeping; and, inflation.

Despite the use of better criteria to determine fees and the associated fee increases across the U.S., 60 (63%) of the 96 respondents that charge fees in 2007/08 reported that their fees do not cover the costs of long-term curation. Several of these respondents said that they do not charge higher fees to cover their real costs for fear that fewer collections will be deposited with them. They also seem to recognize what the market will bear and want to stay competitive with their neighbors. Eighteen respondents (19%) noted that the fees did cover their costs. This may be because they are the only repository charging fees in their state, they charge some of the highest rates in their state, or they charge annually, not one fee in perpetuity. Another ten (10%) respondents said that possibly, or hopefully, the fees will cover the costs of curation since they are just beginning to charge fees or have just changed their fee structure. Another seven (7%) repositories did not know whether their fees will cover their costs. In the end, it seems that repositories are more content with their fees when they charge annually or in

set time intervals, so the fees may be periodically reassessed. Several noted, however, that these types of fees are harder to administer and incur their own costs.

In fact, fees are usually collected by a repository either as the collection is being deposited or following an invoice. The funds are then placed in a general operating account. Only 19 (20%) repositories have an interest-bearing account for the fees. Trusts and endowments are included in this count, although they have restrictions on how and how much of the funds may be used. Notably, one state passed legislation to establish a trust account to use for curation.

Unfortunately, many state university repositories and state museums cannot use interest-bearing accounts due to institutional policy or state or local regulations. Some respondents said they could use an interest-bearing account, but choose not to because the monies will go to a general state account and will not be dedicated to the needs of the repository. Six of the 19 repositories mentioned above put only a portion of their fees into interest-bearing accounts and use the rest for ongoing curation purposes. They do not have the luxury of being able to put all the fee revenues into an interest-bearing account since some part is needed immediately to fund annual basic operations.

Five respondents said that they had discussed, or are in the middle of discussing, plans for obtaining an interest-accruing account.

Uses of the Fees

All three informal surveys asked about the intended use(s) of the one-time or annual curation fees once collected. While many institutions cited more than one use, the primary ones are listed below in order of frequency, along with the number and percentage of repositories that mentioned each:

- To cover initial processing and accessioning costs (cleaning, cataloging, shelving, conservation, acid-free materials and/or other general curation supplies) and the costs of long-term maintenance of in-perpetuity collections. (77 [80%])
- To pay for expansion and increase of space projects (e.g., pay for rented storage space in proper self-storage facilities). (16 [17%])
- To pay students and curation specialists for the routine maintenance of collections. (10 [10%])
- To combat rising costs of heating/cooling and electricity (general inflation). (8 [8%])
- To bring the collections up to Federal regulations set forth in 36 CFR 79 or to comply with the Native American Graves Protections and Repatriation Act. (6 [6%])
- To combat state budget cuts. (4 [4%])
- Are self-funded non-profits and must cover all costs through fees and grants. (3 [3%])

The intended use of the collected fees generally overlaps with the criteria used to develop a fee structure. This is because most of the uses mentioned related to long-term care of the collections, including the operations of the storage facility itself. In order to justify the fees, repositories must show a strong correlation between the criteria used to set the fee structure and the uses of the fee monies.

Key Insights and Trends over a Decade of Study

The benefit of conducting three informal surveys over a decade is that both trends and issues can be identified and then monitored to determine their significance. The following lists some of the trends and issues identified to date:

- The data from 1997/98 and 2002 indicated that curation fees varied unpredictably across the U.S. With the 2007/08 data, it is now clear that there will be at least one repository that charges fees in nearly all the states. There is at least one repository in most of the states currently without a fee-charging repository that is considering doing so.
- Curation fees continue to rise as repositories better understand the real costs of curation and increase fees to properly care for the collections. The current trend for many repositories, however, is to keep their fees comparable to their neighbors.
- The repositories in the western states continue to charge the highest fees. This is most likely due to the extensive federal and state lands in these states that are undergoing development and, therefore, require archeological compliance work and subsequent curatorial services. The high curation fees may be influenced by supply and demand (there are not enough repositories to handle the demand), but the high costs of property, utilities, and materials strongly impact the fees charged.
- Fewer repositories do not charge fees for curation. For example, 12 (7%) university-based repositories accept non-university collections without charging fees in 2007/08 in comparison to 20 (18%) in 2002. Clearly, the economic pressure to charge fees still prevails since four (2%) more of these repositories are now considering charging fees. This compares to two (2%) university-based repositories in 2002 and seven (7%) in 1997/8.
- In 1997/98, only a few repositories charged both a one-time in-perpetuity fee and an annual fee, probably because most tried to cover all their long-term costs in one fee. The 2002 and 2007/08 data reveal an increase in the number of repositories that charge both a one-time fee, as an initial entry and processing fee, and a minimal annual fee to cover yearly responsibilities, such as inspection, inventory, and conservation. Several repositories are considering only charging an annual fee and dropping the one-time, in-perpetuity fee.

This is a key issue that requires careful dialog between the repositories and the federal government agencies, in particular, that own and are responsible for the collections. This is because many collections are the result of compliance activities, often by a third party permittee, for a land-use action that requires mitigation (e.g., cell tower construction, oil pipeline). The permittee or proponent of the action pays for the curation fees out of the project budget, which ends when the project ends. There is no funding for continuing annual fees. Furthermore, many government agencies fund development projects, such as the construction of irrigation systems or highways, and lack appropriated funds for ongoing programs to pay for annual fees.

- There is a noticeable trend in repositories that now acknowledge the differences involved in curating artifacts as opposed to associated records and, therefore, have a separate fee for associated records in the fee structure. Furthermore, by 2007/08, there was a notable increase in the number of repositories that charge more for the associated records than the artifacts.
- Also related to associated records, a few repositories are beginning to address the significant amount of documentation that is now digital. Instead of storing the data container in a box, which does not deal with the actual data on the floppy disk or CD, a few repositories are downloading the digital records onto a server, associating them with the appropriate software, addressing migration issues, and dealing with long-term preservation of and access to the data. This critical process, however, has considerable costs and a few repositories are now charging a fee for this service. It is likely that more repositories will take on this service and charge accordingly.

- With each informal survey, some repositories added one or more new types of curatorial services and associated fees. In the 2007/08 study, two new fee-based services were identified. One is for properly curating digital records and the other is for maintenance. The latter involves additional care and/or conservation of individual objects or portions of collections beyond that covered by the one-time or annual fees already paid. The fact that repositories are adding new services and fees over time suggests that the curation of archeological collections is evolving and requires some new practices to uphold basic, professional standards.
- Repositories are becoming more selective in accepting collections through two primary means. One is through their scopes of collections, which identify specific characteristics of collections a repository will accept. These criteria include location of the archeological project and/or the associated time period or cultural history of the collection. The other means is through a repository's collections acceptance policy, which states the conditions under which the collection must be delivered to the repository. The collections acceptance policy is an important development, because the repository staff now can spend more effort on long-term care rather than initial processing of a new collection.
- There is a slow, but gradual increase in the number of repositories that are placing curation fee monies in interest-bearing accounts, including trusts and endowments. This is a sound economical approach that supports an optimistic future for the collections.
- The problem of finding adequate space to curate incoming archeological collections is increasing. For example, 26 university-based repositories in 2007/08 curate only collections recovered by their university staff; of these, 13 formerly accepted new collections and charged curation fees. They stopped because of lack of space and/or lack of support from their university administration.
- An issue raised from the 1997/98 and 2002 informal surveys – the need to standardize box sizes for better comparability of fees and services across repositories – has largely gone away. Most repositories base their assessment of collection size and fee structure on the cubic foot or the slightly larger archival box. The linear inch or linear foot is used for associated records.

Conclusions

This report summarizes the results from the 2007/08 informal study of repository fees charged for archeological collections across the United States. It also examines some significant trends and issues. These include changes in the types of fees charged, the nationwide distribution of the current fees charged, the criteria used to determine the fee structures, and the increase in the lack of curation space.

There continues to be inadequate funding available to support the long-term care and management of archeological collections. This includes the professional staff to provide the necessary services, and the space to house the collections and make them accessible across the United States. Therefore, both the collection owners and the repositories benefit when an appropriate fee is charged and paid for curation services. The public, including researchers, educators, students, and culturally-affiliated people, also benefit when the collections are in good condition and are curated in a protected place for ongoing access and use.

If you would like to provide comments on this report or contribute new data, please contact [Terry Childs](#).

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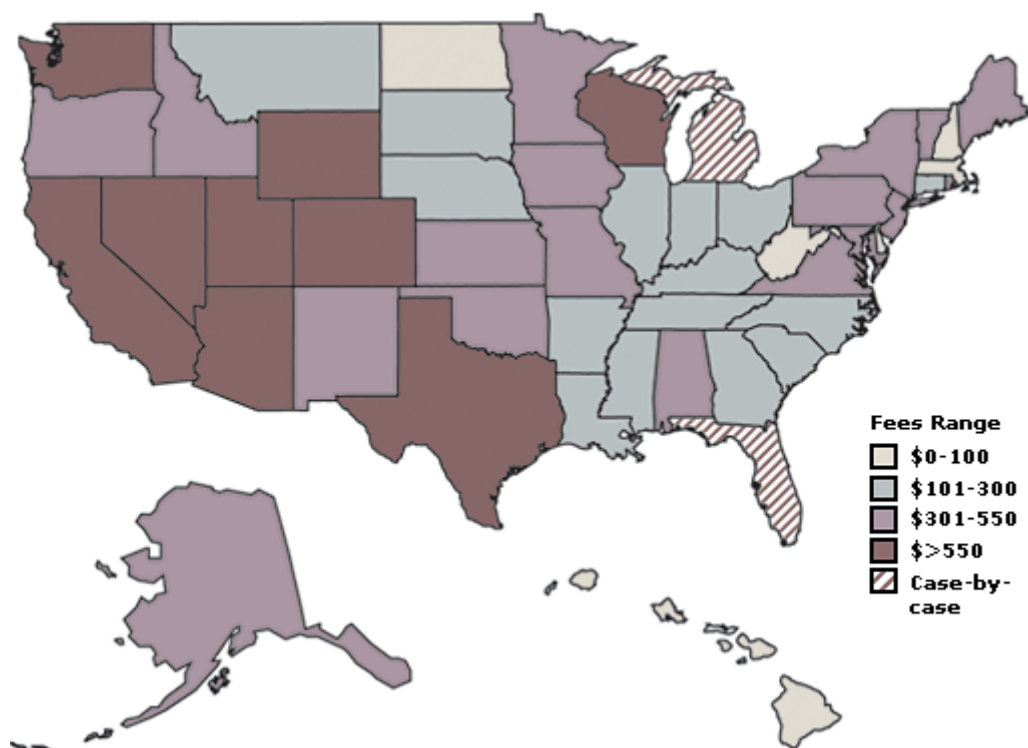
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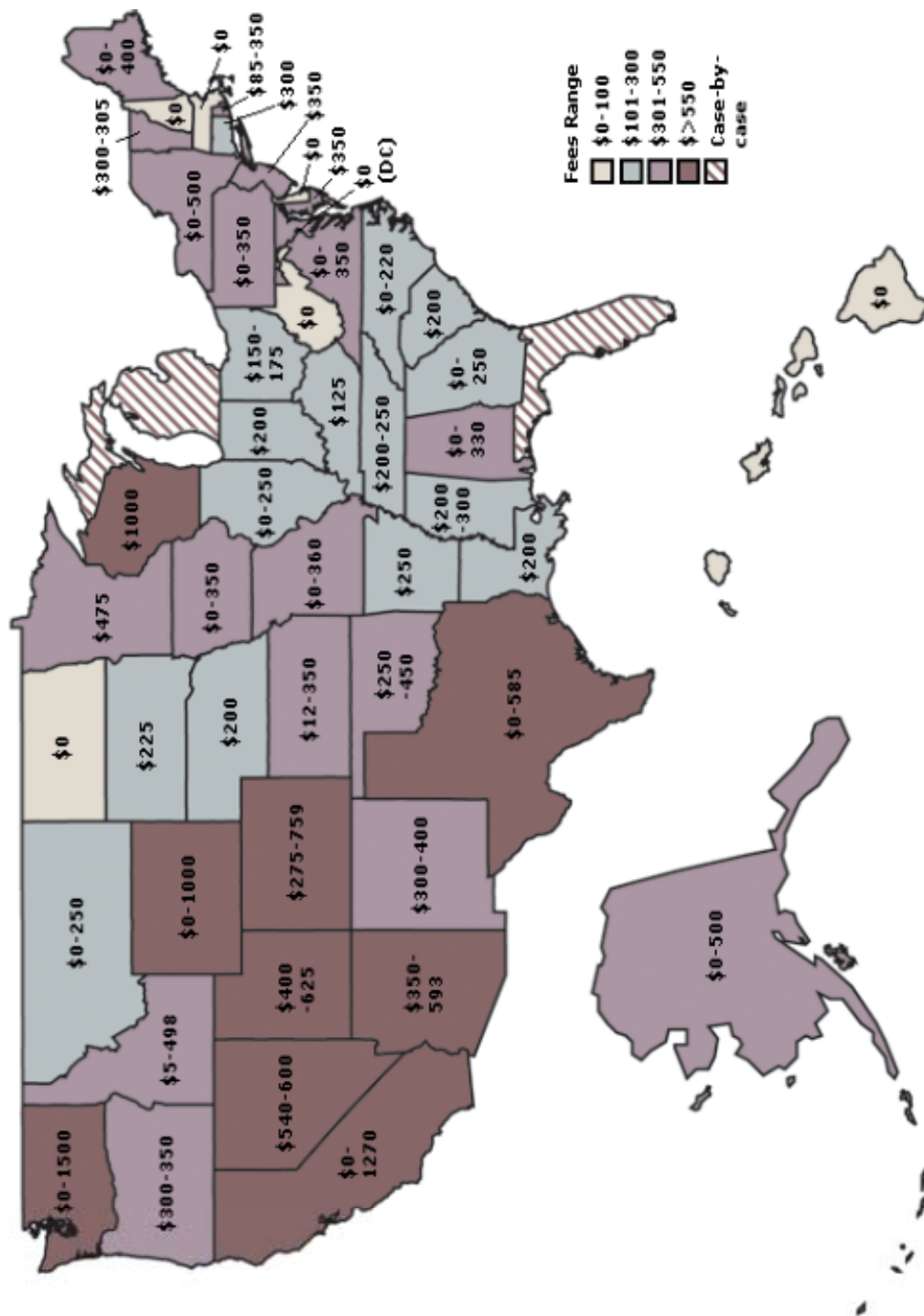
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Map 1. Variation in in-perpetuity fees for 2007/08



Map 2. Range of fees charged in 2007/08



Credits

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Listed alphabetically below are the names of the repositories that responded to the informal questionnaire in 2007/08 in each state, although not all were used in the final compilation of data. Each institution listed below provided useful information and deserves our great thanks.

Alabama

Alabama A&M University
Alabama Department of Archives and History
University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Research
University of Southern Alabama

Alaska

Alaska State Museum
Alutiiq Museum and Repository
Baranov Museum, Kodiak Historical Society
Museum of the Aleutians in Unalaska
University of Alaska Museum, Archaeology Department

Arizona

Amerind Foundation, Inc.
Arizona State University, Archaeological Research Institute
Museum of Northern Arizona
Pueblo Grande Museum
University of Arizona, Arizona State Museum

Arkansas

Arkansas State University Museum
University of Arkansas Collections Facility

California

Adan E. Treganza Anthropology Museum, San Francisco State University
California State Archaeological Collections Research Facility
California State University, Chico, Archaeology Laboratory

California State University, Sacramento
Fresno City College, Department of Anthropology
Maturango Museum
San Bernardino County Museum
San Diego Archaeological Center
San Diego State University
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
Sherman Indian Museum
Sonoma State University, Archaeological Collections Facility
University of California, Berkeley, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology
University of California, Los Angeles, Fowler Museum of Cultural History
University of California, Riverside, Archaeological Curation Unit
University of California, Santa Barbara, Repository of Archaeological and Ethnographic Collections

Colorado

Anasazi Heritage Museum
Colorado State University, Laboratory of Public Archaeology
Crow Canyon Archaeological Center
Denver Museum of Nature and Science
Museum Of Western Colorado
University of Colorado Museum
University of Denver, Museum of Anthropology

Connecticut

University of Connecticut, Archives and Special Collections, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
University of Connecticut, Connecticut State Museum of Natural History

Delaware

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

District of Columbia

District of Columbia Office of Planning and Historic Preservation Office
George Washington University Archaeology Laboratory
Smithsonian Museum of Natural History

Florida

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
Florida Division of Historical Resources
University of Florida, Museum of Natural History
University of West Florida, Archaeology Institute

Georgia

Columbus Museum
State University of West Georgia, Antonio J. Waring, Jr. Archaeological Laboratory
University of Georgia Museum of Natural History, Archaeological Laboratory

Hawaii

Bishop Museum, The State Museum of Natural and Cultural History
University of Hawaii at Manoa, Archaeology Laboratory

Idaho

Idaho State Historical Society, Western Repository
Idaho State University, Idaho Museum of Natural History, Eastern Repository
University of Idaho, Alfred W. Bowers Laboratory of Anthropology, Northern Repository

Illinois

Aurora University, Schingoethe Center for Native American Cultures
Illinois State Museum
Northern Illinois University
Southern Illinois University, Center for Archaeological Investigations
University of Illinois, Illinois Transportation Archaeology Program

Indiana

Indiana University, Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology,
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne Archaeology Survey

Iowa

Sanford Museum and Planetarium
University of Iowa, Office of the State Archaeologist

Kansas

Fort Hays State University
Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archaeology
University of Kansas, Museum of Anthropology
Wichita State University

Kentucky

Northern Kentucky University, Museum of Anthropology
University of Kentucky, William S. Webb Museum of Anthropology
University of Louisville, Program in Archaeology

Louisiana

Louisiana Division of Archaeology

Maine

Abbe Museum
Maine State Museum
University of Maine at Farmington, Archaeology Research Center
University of Maine at Orono

Maryland

Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Commonwealth Museum
Harvard University, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography
Philips Academy at Andover, Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology
University of Massachusetts Museum of Natural History

Michigan

Michigan Historical Center
Northwestern Michigan College, Dennon Museum Center

University of Michigan
Western Michigan University

Minnesota

Minnesota Historical Society

Mississippi

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Mississippi State University, Cobb Institute of Archaeology
University of Southern Mississippi, Anthropology Laboratory

Missouri

Southwest Missouri State University, Center for Archaeological Research
University of Missouri, Columbia, Museum of Anthropology
Washington University in St. Louis

Montana

Billings Curation Center
Montana Historical Society
Montana State University, Museum of the Rockies

Nebraska

Nebraska State Historical Society, Archaeology Division
University of Nebraska State Museum

Nevada

Desert Research Institute
Lost City Museum, Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs
Nevada State Museum
Northeastern Nevada Museum
University of Nevada, Department of Anthropology, Stead Storage Facility
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Harry Reid Center

New Hampshire

Mount Kearsage Indian Museum
New Hampshire Archaeological Society
New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, Department of Cultural Resources
New Hampshire Historical Society
Sargent Museum

New Jersey

New Jersey Bureau of Archaeology and Ethnology, New Jersey State Museum

New Mexico

Eastern New Mexico University, Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology
New Mexico Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Laboratory of Anthropology
New Mexico State University, Museum of Anthropology
San Juan County Museum Association Salmon Ruins Museum and Research Lab
University of New Mexico, Maxwell Museum of Anthropology

New York

American Museum of Natural History
Iroquois Indian Museum
New York State Museum
New York University
State University of New York, Binghamton, Public Archaeology Facility
State University of New York, Brockport
State University of New York, Buffalo

North Carolina

North Carolina Office of State Archaeology
University of North Carolina, Research Laboratories of Archaeology
Wake Forest University, Museum of Anthropology

North Dakota

North Dakota State University
State Historical Society of North Dakota
University of North Dakota

Ohio

Cincinnati Museum Center
Cleveland Museum of Natural History

Oklahoma

Museum of the Great Plains
University of Oklahoma, Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

Oregon

Oregon State University
South Oregon University
University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History, State Museum of Anthropology

Pennsylvania

Bryn Mawr College
Carnegie Museum of Natural History
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
State Museum of Pennsylvania
University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Rhode Island

Haffenreffer Museum at Brown University
Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.
Rhode Island Department of Transportation

South Carolina

University of South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology

South Dakota

South Dakota State Historical Society Archaeological Research Center

Tennessee

University of Memphis, C. H. Nash Museum

University of Tennessee, Anthropology Collections Facility
University of Tennessee, Frank H. McClung Museum

Texas

Houston Museum of Natural Science
Southern Methodist University
Texas A&M University, Center for Ecological Archaeology
University of Texas at Austin, Texas Archaeological Research Center
University of Texas at San Antonio, Center for Archaeological Research

Utah

College of Eastern Utah, Prehistoric Museum
Edge of the Cedars Museum
Museum of Peoples and Cultures, Brigham Young University
Southern Utah University, Archaeology Repository
University of Utah Museum of Natural History
Utah Fieldhouse of Natural History and State Park
Weber State University

Vermont

University of Vermont, Consulting Archaeology Program
Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center

Virginia

Alexandria Archaeology Museum and Storage Facility
Regional Archaeological Curation Facility at Fort Lee, Virginia
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Washington and Lee University, Archaeology Program
William and Mary University, Center for Archaeological Research

Washington

Eastern Washington University, Archaeological and Historical Services
University of Washington, Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture
Wanapum Heritage Center
Washington State University, Museum of Anthropology
Yakima Valley Museum

West Virginia

West Virginia Division of Culture and History

Wisconsin

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Archaeological Research Laboratory
Wisconsin Historical Society

Wyoming

Buffalo Bill Historical Center
University of Wyoming
Wyoming State Museum